
REMARKS

Applicant has rewritten the independent claim 1 to define the invention more particularly and distinctively so as to overcome the rejections and define the invention patentably over the prior art. The amendment does not add a new subject matter since it is based on the specification (see, e.g., 14:4-8, 15:23-29).

Claim rejection under § 112

The claims of the present invention were rejected by Examiner as being anticipated by Estrada (US Patent application US2003/0135565 A1, hereinafter "Estrada"). Applicant respectfully disagrees with that conclusion.

Estrada is definitely a relevant reference: both present invention and Estrada contribute to the same general area of supporting the user by organizing various kinds of information around meaningful activities/projects. However, the present invention does that in a different way from Estrada.

Present invention vs. Estrada: general remarks

Before replying to concrete claim rejections, applicant would like to make a few general remarks to differentiate between the **location-based approach** represented by Estrada and **location-independent approach** represented by the present invention. The remarks are intended to provide a conceptual ground for the discussion of specific claims in the sections that follow.

Location-based approach

A common approach to setting a project context in a virtual workspace is
-- creating a *project space* (that can consist of sub-spaces), as a part of the whole workspace, and

-- placing project-related information objects in the project space.

This is a location-based approach. Whether or not a certain information object is related to a project, depends on where the object is located.

Estrada belongs to that approach. He teaches creating project folders in email applications and placing project-related information, such as messages, files, and so on, to the folders (and their sub-folders).

Disadvantages of the location-based approach

Even though the location-based approach has a number of advantages, it also has disadvantages. One disadvantage is that the same object cannot belong to several different projects. For instance, if a document is placed in the project space of Project A but the user also wants to use the same document in Project B, as well, the user has to create a copy or a shortcut (that is, a separate object) and place it in the project space of Project B.

Location-independent approach

A possible way to cope with the above disadvantage is to make project contexts independent from locations of information objects. This is the general approach adopted by the present invention. Linking an information object to a certain project is achieved by adding a description of the information object to a project-specific list of resources. The object can remain at the same location. Therefore, according to present invention project contexts are *location-independent*. Also, the same object can be linked to several projects.

Illustrating example

Imagine a user who has two types of project support systems independently running in parallel on his or her computer: one according to present invention and one according to Estrada. The user (a) enters the project context of Project A, and (b) opens a message in the project folder of Project B.

Table 1. An example

	Present invention	Estrada
1. User enters the project context of Project A	The user explicitly selects Project A as the active project	The user opens the project folder of Project A
2. User opens email message M, placed in the project folder of Project B	Message M is linked to Project A as the currently active project	Message M is stored in the same project folder, so it is related only to Project B

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		and is NOT to Project A.
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As shown in Table 1, the present invention and Estrada would exhibit different behaviors. In step 2 the present invention would add email message M to the project context of *Project A* (currently active), while Estrada, as a location-based system, would not do that.

SPECIFIC RESPONSE TO CLAIM REJECTIONS

Claims 1-34 of the present invention were rejected by Examiner as being anticipated by Estrada (US Patent application US2003/0135565 A1). Applicant respectfully disagrees with that conclusion for the following reasons.

AS PER CLAIM 1. The rejection of claim 1 on Estrada is overcome. Estrada does not show novel features of claim 1, which features produce new and significant results.

An amended Claim 1 of the present invention reads as follows:

Claim 1. A method providing low-overhead integrated support for project information management for a user of a computer system, comprising the method steps of:
creating a memory storage containing individual descriptions of each project listed in a group of projects, each individual description comprising one or more properties, said properties selected from a group consisting of at least: a name, deadline, color, icon, status, importance, and urgency; said memory storage also containing descriptions of information objects related to each project listed in said group of projects; said information objects selected from a group consisting of at least: computer files and folders, computer applications, electronic documents and their parts, web pages, computer network addresses, electronic messages, computer network transmissions, computer network connections, computer device descriptions, computer preferences and settings, user identities, user profiles and accounts, computer system-generated reports and collections, user interface components, virtual reality objects, electronic images, computer models, and personal information management system entries;

selecting, through a user-performed action, one project of said group of projects as an active project;

detecting, through a first detecting means, an event generated by one of at least one computer application and at least one operating system when a user-action is carried out with at least one information object, the user-action selected from a list consisting of at least: creating, deleting, activating, inactivating, selecting, deselecting, opening, closing, viewing, sending, receiving, downloading, uploading, accessing over network, sharing, archiving, printing out, playing, pausing, saving, copying, moving, modifying, or editing said at least one information object;

detecting, through a second detecting means, a project, which is active at the time when said event is generated;

detecting, through a third detecting means, whether at least one of the information objects described in said event is not contained in a list of information objects related to said active project:

and if said at least one information object described in said event is not contained in said list of information objects related to said active project, then adding a description of said at least one information object to said list of information objects related to said active project;

viewing lists of project-related information objects;

opening an information object from a list of project-related information objects; whereby an organization and accumulation of information objects related to individual projects of the user is accomplished in the computer system, thus enabling the user to directly access project-related information objects when work on a project is resumed after an intermission.

Applicant respectfully submits that claim 1 is substantially different from Estrada. The main differences are as follows.

The present invention, as opposed to Estrada, teaches a location-independent approach to creating project contexts

The present invention, as already mentioned, teaches a location-independent approach to creating project contexts. Project contexts are composed of descriptions

of information objects. The objects themselves can be placed anywhere in the system, and the same object can be linked to several projects. Estrada cannot do that. (For a more detailed discussion of the difference between the location-based and location-independent approaches see "Present invention vs. Estrada: General remarks" above).

The present invention, as opposed to Estrada, teaches linking information objects to user's projects by detecting the project active at the time of using an object

Claim 1 of the present invention teaches linking information objects to user's projects through monitoring actions of the user: detecting a user action with an information object, detecting the project active at the time of the action, and adding the information object to the list of resources associated with the project.

This type of creating project contexts through user monitoring is not taught by Estrada. True, Estrada does mention monitoring of project activities but this monitoring is very different from the current invention.

For instance, Estrada [0118] reads:

According to another embodiment of the invention, a user may create an electronic mail message with a file attached as shown in FIG. 24. This may be performed in any manner. When a message relating to a project is received by a participant, however, the system may, in addition to receiving the message in a standard and project folder, place the attached file into a files folder for the project as shown in FIG. 25. (emphasis by applicant)

In [0118] above and Fig 24-25 Estrada teaches an automatic placing of a file attached to a project-related message to an appropriate project folder. However, Estrada does not specify there how the message in question becomes associated with a project. In no way does Estrada imply that the file in question is linked to the project that is active at the time of receiving the message. On the contrary, the latter, arguably, would be in conflict with Estrada's [0118] teaching.

A thorough examination of Estrada as a whole reveals that Estrada mentions three types of user monitoring. The first type is detecting changes in the workspace of one participant and using that for *propagating changes* into the collaboration space

as a whole by synchronizing individual workspaces (e.g., claims 28, 97, [0020], [0041]- [0044]). In that case the system does not link information objects to projects. The linking is already done before synchronization begins, for instance, by the user who places an information object in a project folder. The role of the system is limited to synchronizing an updated content of a project folder with project folders of other collaborating participants. Therefore, by carrying out this type of monitoring the system DOES NOT link information objects to specific projects.

Another type of monitoring project activities, mentioned by Estrada, is an automatic placement of received information, email messages or attached files, to appropriate project folders (e.g., [0113], [0118]). It is important to mention, that *in contrast to the present invention the project that is active at the time of receiving information is totally irrelevant to relating information objects to projects*. For instance, if the user at a certain moment receives several simultaneously arrived replies to previously sent email messages related to several different projects, each of the replies would be placed to a correct project folder irrespective of the user project active at the moment when the messages have arrived.

Finally, the third type of monitoring is used for creating daily or weekly summaries of project or folder activities (e.g., [0122]). This type of monitoring is not used for linking information objects to specific projects, either.

To sum up, a careful examination of Estrada reveals that *none of the types of monitoring taught by Estrada can be employed for linking an information object to the project that is active at the time of using the information object*, as taught by the present invention.

The present invention, as opposed to Estrada, is application-independent

Estrada specifically discloses an *email application* with project management capabilities, while the present invention is application-independent; it can be used in combination with various types of computer applications.

The present invention, as opposed to Estrada, aims at supporting individual users rather than collaborating groups

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The present invention aims at organizing individual workspaces around meaningful projects/activities of the user, while Estrada aims at supporting activities or projects "between two or more individuals" (see [0005]).

As per Claim 1: Conclusion

Table 2 summarizes the main differences between the present invention and Estrada. Taken together, the arguments in this section clearly indicate that the subject matter of Claim 1 is patentable over Estrada.

Also, a close examination of other references mentioned by Examiner: US 5, 890, 131 (Ebert et al, a project optimization software tool), US 5, 951, 642 (Onoe et al, collecting information about internet viewers viewing information of service providers), and US 6, 631, 496 (LI et al., a hypermedia database for managing bookmarks) revealed that Claim 1 of the present invention is patentable over those references, as well.

Table 2. Present invention vs. Estrada: A summary

	Present invention	Estrada
Project contexts are	Location-independent	Location-based
The same information object can belong to several projects	YES	NO
Users enter a project context...	...by explicitly indicating that the project is active	...by navigating to the project space of the project
An information object is linked to a project through detecting the project active at the time of user-action with the object	YES	NO
The system is integrated into an email application	NO	YES
Primary support	Individual users	Collaborating groups

AS PER CLAIM 2. Estrada does not teach creating database entries containing interaction histories. There is no mentioning of such histories in the text of the application. FIGS. 11, 22, 26 depict lists of messages in project folders and the inbox, not interaction history entries. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claim 1 and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIMS 3, 4 and 6. Estrada does not teach viewing, editing, or processing interaction histories. For instance, in [0119] Estrada teaches a file library in an email folder. This is different from the present invention, which teaches an interaction history database. Also, FIG. 11 shows a project folder with a list of email messages, not an interaction history. The claims incorporate all the subject matter of claims 1 and 2, and add additional subject matter, which makes claims 3,4, and 6 novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 5. Estrada does not teach visualizing interaction histories. For instance, in [0016] Estrada teaches task views containing, for instance, task status, responsibility, etc.; Fig. 14 depicts a project calendar folder, not an interaction history. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claims 1 and 2, and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 7. Estrada does not teach assigning ranks to resources. For instance, FIG. 26 shows version, size, author, and "modified" time, but not ranks of project-related files. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claims 1 and 2, and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 8. Estrada does not teach resource-specific project-related interaction histories. For instance, in [0116] Estrada teaches a task view; in [0136] Estrada teaches sending project-related information objects to "email participants" as email messages including the information objects, and in FIGS. 9-14 Estrada shows inbox, project, task, and calendar folders, but not interaction histories. The claim

incorporates all the subject matter of claims 1 and 2, and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 9. Estrada does not teach clues indicating for how long individual projects are not active. In FIG. 13 Estrada shows task statuses (as overdue, in progress, not started, current, or complete) but not for how long individual projects are not active. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claims 1 and 2, and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 10. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claim 1 and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 11. Estrada does not teach minimized and maximized views. For instance, FIGS 10 and 11 illustrate an inbox folder and a project folder, not a difference between minimized and maximized views. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claim 1 and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 12. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claims 1 and 10, and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 13. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claims 1 and 10, and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 14. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claims 1, 10 and 13, and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 15. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claim 1 and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art. Also, concerning Interaction history database, see "As per claim 8" above.

AS PER CLAIM 16. Estrada does not teach generating a project description document. For instance, none of FIGS. 2-14 discloses such a document. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claim 1 and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 17. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claims 1 and 15, and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 18. Estrada does not teach storing/opening resources that are open at the moment of inactivating a project. For instance, in [0040] - [0044] Estrada teaches synchronization of projects, which is different. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claim 1 and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 19. The claim teaches synchronizing location-independent project contexts with the "spatial" structure of an individual workspace by rearranging the latter. Estrada, employing a purely location-based approach, does not teach that. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claim 1 and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 20. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claims 1 and 15, and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 21. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claims 1, 15 and 20, and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 22. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claim 1 and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 23. Estrada does not teach "ignored" information objects. For instance, in [0031] Estrada teaches avoiding processing several copies of the same message. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claim 1 and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 24. Estrada does not teach information objects bound to specific objects. In [0028] - [0032] Estrada teaches a number of information objects properties, but not the objects being bound to projects. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claim 1 and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 25. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claims 1 and 24, and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 26. Estrada does not teach assigning ranks to resources. For instance, FIG. 26 shows version, size, author, and "modified" time, but not ranks of project-related files. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claim 1 and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIM 27. The claim incorporates all the subject matter of claim 1 and adds additional subject matter, which makes it novel and patentable over prior art.

AS PER CLAIMS 28-34. The claims recite an apparatus for performing a similar method as discussed in claims 1-27, and their rejections are overcome with the same arguments.

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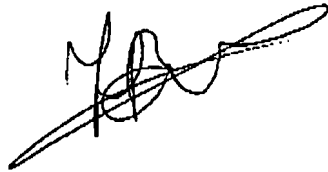
Conclusion

For all of the above reasons, applicant submits that the specification and claims are now in proper form, and that the claims all define patentably over the prior art. Therefore he submits that this application is now in condition for allowance, which action he respectfully solicits.

Conditional request for constructive assistance

Applicant has amended the claims of this application so that they are proper, definite, and define novel structure, which is also unobvious. If, for any reason, this application is not believed to be in full condition for allowance, applicant respectfully requests the constructive assistance and suggestions of the Examiner pursuant to MPEP § 706.03(d) and § 707.07(j) in order that the undersigned can place this application in allowable condition as soon as possible and without the need for further proceedings.

Very respectfully,



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